

Statement of Congressman Christopher Shays In Support of H.R. 1836, the Weir Farm National Historic Site Amendment Act

H.R. 1836, a bill to amend the Weir Farm National Historic Site Establishment Act of 1990, would allow the National Park Service (NPS) to move its administrative facilities at Weir Farm National Historic Site from Wilton, Connecticut to Georgetown in Redding, Connecticut.

Currently, Public Law 105-363 only authorizes land acquisition of property “contiguous to” the park, which includes the towns of Ridgefield and Wilton, Connecticut. This bill would change this clause to “within Fairfield County,” thereby allowing the NPS to consider facilities across the County.

Weir Farm contributes to Connecticut's rich culture and history. It is the only National Park Service site in Connecticut, and the only park in the country dedicated to an American painter. Located in Ridgefield and Wilton, Connecticut, Weir Farm hosts approximately 15,000 to 17,000 visitors annually. These visitors come to enjoy the Farm's 110 acres and the studios that are a living monument to Julian Alden Weir's work.

The Park Service would like to consider a site for a new administrative facility in Redding, Connecticut. The site, located at the Georgetown Wire Mill in Redding, is two miles from Weir Farm. H.R. 1836 would grant the Park Service the authority to expand the Weir Farm facilities into Redding. This measure has received support from the Superintendent of Weir Farm, and the Wilton and Redding local communities.

Weir Farm provides its visitors with a true understanding of the life of J. Alden Weir and the beautiful landscape he captured on canvas. H.R. 1836 would allow the Park Service to continue to improve its off-site administrative facilities in keeping with the park's mission “to maintain the integrity of a setting that inspired artistic expression,” and I strongly urge the committee to support this bill.